United Nations A/HRC/31/NGO/133

General Assembly

Distr.: General
22 February 2016

English only

Human Rights Council
Thirty-first session
Agenda item 3
Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Joint written statement* submitted by Liberal International (World Liberal Union), non-governmental organizations in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 February 2016]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.16-02642(E)

Please recycle

Deterioration of the State of Democracy and the Rule of Law around the World

Liberal International (LI) welcomes the efforts of the United Nations (UN) to promote democratic governance around the world and fully supports the newly established UN forum on human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which aims to promote dialogue and cooperation on issues pertaining to these areas.

This statement would like to bring attention to the worrisome trend pertaining to an ever-increasing deterioration in the respect for basic democratic principles and the rule of law in the following countries:

Burundi

-Recognising that the Independent National Electoral Commission organised the 2015 Presidential elections under conditions carrying the seeds of conflict and that the process had been boycotted by the opposition by withdrawing its candidates

-Stressing on the fact that the results of these elections were rejected by the Burundian opposition, a large section of Burundian civil society and the international community as the candidacy and election of President Nkurunziza did not comply with either the constitution of the country or the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation agreement

-Denouncing the recent decision of the African Union to halt the deployment of 5000 peacekeepers and warning that this has the great potential to plunge the country into further destabilization and chaos accelerating the process of gross human rights violations against innocent civilians

-Acknowledging that all initiatives undertaken by the African Union, European Union, United States of America and the UN with the purpose of reaching a consensus among the political protagonists for the organisation of free, transparent and inclusive elections have not been heeded

-Deploring the fact that this categorical refusal to engage in a dialogue to find sustainable solutions to the political conflict relating to the third term of office of President Nkurunziza has been compounded by acts of violence characterised by selective killings of a genocidal nature, abductions and forced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of opponents, forced exile of popular political opposition leaders, sexual violence against women and girls, destruction and closing down of the media, and the closure and suspension of certain civil society organizations

People's Republic of China

-Recognizing the continued suppression of freedom of expression and assembly in the People's Republic of China with thousands of unfair judicial proceedings in cases concerning civil society activists, journalists, pro-democracy campaigners, and political dissidents still prevalent

-Reiterating its concern that given the gravity of the situation in the South China Sea, China continues with its military build-up in this part of the world and refuses to resolve disputes based on international law

Cambodia

-Condemning the ruling party for breaking up the establishment of the political settlement with the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) and reinstating the politically motivated conviction against the leader of the liberal opposition Sam Rainsy
-Recognizing that the latest controversial law on the regulation of nongovernmental organisations followed by an announcement from Prime Minister Hun Sen to amend Cambodia's election law and bar Cambodians with dual citizenship from being political party leaders poses a direct threat to basic rights and freedoms

-Stressing on the fact that this is counter-productive for ending the political deadlock in the country and may lead to great consequences for the future of the democratic process in the country

Cuba

-Considering that despite the recent progress expressed by the restoration of the diplomatic ties with the USA, Cuba remains as a one-party state ruled by Communist military elite which denies basic civil and political rights to its citizens

-Recognizing that the Cuban democratic opposition and all individuals who attempt to exercise their rights to free expression, opinion, association, and assembly continue to face judicial prosecution and physical reprisals

-Noting with deep regret that the multiple requests for the UN to set up an international committee in order to conduct an independent investigation into the suspicious circumstances surrounding the death of Cuban opposition leader Oswaldo Paya remain unanswered

Congo Brazzaville

-Condemning the recent referendum which eliminated the constitution's two-year term limit on the Presidency paving the way for great abuse of power and subsequent violations of basic rights and freedoms

-Acknowledging that the political situation in the country remains volatile following arrests and judicial intimidation of leaders of the opposition as dictated by President Dénis Sassou Guesso in order to prevent campaigning and other political activities ahead of the general elections later this year

Democratic Republic of the Congo

-Recognizing that the significant delay on the part of the government and the national independent electoral commission in fulfilling their responsibility to organize local, provincial, parliamentary and presidential elections in the country poses serious threats to the democratic process in the country and has the danger of denying voting rights to its citizens

Malaysia:

-Deploring the politically motivated persecution and conviction of the liberal opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim on the basis of trumped up criminal charges and expresses great concern at his deteriorating health in prison and government delays in providing medical care for his declining condition

-Expressing deep concern about the lack of independence of the Malaysian judicial system as evidenced by the latest disappointment with the latest ruling of the Malaysian Judicial Court on the corruption case against President Najib

Myanmar[1]

-Acknowledging the significant progress achieved in light of the overwhelming victory of the opposition National League for Democracy and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi in the recent parliamentary elections following the partial revocation of powers by the military

-Expressing deep concern about the democratic transition process in the country following the refusal of the Parliament to permit essential constitutional amendments and allow for Aung San Suu Kyi to run in the upcoming Presidential elections

Nicaragua:

[1] Until 1989 referred to in the UN lexicon as Burma as it is still referred to within Liberal International

-Deploring the fact that the situation in Nicaragua continues to deteriorate as President Ortega refuses to accept reputable International and National Observers in the upcoming 2016 elections

-Expressing deep concern that such actions will set the stage for the beginning of yet another armed confrontation among Nicaraguans in 2017

Russia

-Recognizing the increasingly authoritarian political environment in the country which is characterized by ongoing intimidation of NGOs, rising nationalism and religious fundamentalism, clericalization of the country, suppression of freedom of speech and assembly, and political reprisals against the dissenting

-Expressing deep shock by the assassination of opposition liberal leader Boris Nemtsov

-Deploring the ongoing political reprisals by the Russian government against the Russian liberal opposition party Yabloko and the ongoing attacks against the leader of the People's Freedom Party Mikhail Kasyanov by the Chechen dictator Ramzan Kadyrov

-Condemning the recent shut down by the Russian authorities of the annual economic conference "Sibirian Davos", organized by Vladimir Ryzhkov in cooperation with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation as a clear act of intimidation and bullying

-Noting with deep concern that the Russian military activity in the Baltic Sea has increased and has become more aggressive

-Condemning the ongoing Russian creeping annexation in Georgia, categorical annexation of Crimea and repeated military engagement in Eastern Ukraine

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela:

-Noting the progress achieved in the conduct of the most recent legislative elections which led the opposition to sweeping victory for the first time in 17 years resulting in narrow majority in the National Assembly

-Stressing on the fact that many Constitutional hurdles to a free and transparent democratic system remain with ongoing political confrontations between the legislative and the executive branches on the rise

Recalls:

-Its World Today Resolution to 60th LI Congress in Mexico City which called for free and fair elections in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Congo Brazzaville among others

-Its Written Statement to the 29th Session of the UN Human Rights Council on the deterioration of the state of political and civil rights around the world

-Its Written Statement to the 28th Session of UNHRC which called on the Venezuelan government to honour its international obligations and immediately repeal the new military tactics law targeting peaceful domestic demonstrations

Calls:

-On the Burundian government to take all necessary steps to put an end to the violence, promote a climate of mutual trust between Burundians and resume observance of the Arusha Peace Agreement and the Constitution as to conduct an open dialogue with all stakeholders as to form a consensus on the organisation of credible elections

-On the mediator of the Burundian conflict, the Ugandan President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, to do everything in his power as to commit the political protagonists without reservation (civil and armed movements) so they can engage in a frank, sincere and inclusive dialogue and find sustainable solutions for the restoration of democracy and peace in Burundi

-On the Association of South-East Asian States (ASEAN) to hasten the negotiation with China for a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, especially given the increasing assertion of China over areas claimed by some ASEAN states

-On Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen to denounce the politically motivated charges against the leader of the Cambodia National Rescue Party Sam Rainsy and reinstate the dialogue with the opposition as dictated by the previously established political settlement

-On the Congolese elite to safeguard the credibility of the upcoming polls and on the international community, including the African Union, to monitor the elections in Congo Brazzaville closely as to be prepared to condemn them if necessary and prevent further democratic backsliding

-On the Cuban Government to hold fair and multiparty elections under international supervision and ratify without further delay the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which it is a signatory

-On the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to give priority to holding the parliamentary and legislative elections within the constitutional deadline and encourage the Congolese political class to find a solution which privileges peace and democracy in the country

-On the African Union, European Union and the United Nations to assist the DRC authorities in this process

-On Malaysia's government to release Anwar Ibrahim immediately and unconditionally and on the regional and international community to increase its pressure on the Malaysian ruling party as a clear sign of support for the development of a true democratic process in the country

-On Myanmar's newly elected government to accelerate the process of democratic reform, including the revocation of the constitutional barrier to Aung San Suu Kyi's right to run for the presidency, and to work towards a peaceful solution to the military conflict

-On the Nicaraguan government to comply with its international commitments on matters such as the rule of law, representative democracy and respect for human rights, and implement all necessary reforms as to ensure free and transparent elections

-On the People's Republic of China to adhere to international law, in particular UNCLOS, and multilateral negotiations for peaceful settlement of disputes

-On the Russian authorities to release all political prisoners, organise free and fair elections and abolish the authoritarian vector of Russia's development

-On the Russian leadership to immediately end all military attacks that lead to casualties among civilians in Syria

-On the Russian government to abolish support of separatists in Ukraine and conduct a legitimate and recognized by the UN referendum in Crimea under the observation of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

-On the Organisation of American States to support the Venezuelan opposition in their efforts to restore basic democratic principles in the country

-On the President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro to organize public consultations with grassroots' movements and civil society organisations without further delay as to ensure a truly inclusive political process

Commits:

-For its member parties to continue to fight against totalitarian and communist regimes and seek the promotion and advancement of liberal democracies around the world in line with Liberal International's underpinning Oxford Manifesto

-For its liberal human rights parliamentarians to raise the issue of repression of basic civil and political rights directly with the relevant special procedure mandate holders during its annual gathering at the United Nations Human Rights Council on 24 June 2016